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MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS™

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THE MAN-THING™

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

RICHARD ASHFORD EDITOR
MICHAEL KRAIGER ASSISTANT EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO GROUP EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

COVER BY MARK PACELLA/REY GARCIA

VENGEANCE

"POWER PLAY"

PART 2 OF 3

WRITER .....CHRIS COOPER
BREAKDOWNS .....REGGIE JONES
FINISHES.....FRED HARPER
LETTERS .....DIANA ALBERS
COLORS .....JOE ANDREANI

Madness fills the mall, as Vengeance fights for his survival against Buchanan and his exorcist guns, with power-mad Psiphon as part of the deal.

TIGRA

SLAVE OF PASSION

PART 4 OF 4, "ENSNARED"

WRITER .....DAVID DeVREIS
PENCILS .....JOHN CZOP
INKS .....PABLO MARCOS
LETTERS.....JON BABCOCK
COLORS .....MARYANN LIGHTLE

Tigra uses her kittenish charm, and her tiger like ferocity to free the aborigine women, who were captured and sold into slavery.

FROM RICHARD AND MICHAEL

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, lists as part of it's definition of convention: *an assembly of persons met for a common purpose*. A comic book convention is such an assembly, the common purpose being the enjoyment of comic books. What could be more enjoyable than wading through a room filled to the fire code with people and comics? Table upon table filled with comic books, graphic novels, posters, original art, videos, toys, and ephemera. Comic book conventions are a good place to meet the folks who produce comics. Many artist and publishers make themselves available to discuss their work, or take the time to view the work of those who would like to enter the industry. Publishers often have table or displays to promote their products and upcoming projects. Marvel will be represented at most major conventions, and you'll be able to take a preview look at some of our future projects, meet some artists and writers, or show your samples to an editor. While there may be panel discussions, art shows, films, or a costume contest, everyone knows the real reason to attend any convention, is to find that one elusive issue of the comic book that will complete your entire collection, and at a bargain price too. We hope you get a chance to attend a convention this summer, or maybe meet up with the MARVEL MEGA TOUR, if you do, remember the common purpose, and have fun.

Looking through the five for a dollar box,
Richard and Michael

MARVEL READERS PRESENT

C/O 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

Now that I've got that out of the way, it's time to get to business. Looking at the stories in MCP #'s 152-160. The one shots have gotten better, and the serials, with the exception of Vengeance, have gotten worse! Why have you been giving serials to Wolverine, War Machine, and The New Warriors when they have their own books? Moon Knight's dead and you gave him a serial! The Hawkeye story is more U.S. Agent's tale than Hawkeye's! Though I am enjoying Vengeance's ongoing story, I miss the Ghost Rider team-up stories. Any chance of a Ghost Rider/Vengeance story?

Here are some characters I would like to see spotlighted: Werewolf, Crippler (from SILVER SABLE), Skullfire, The Jury, Devil Slayer, and more Mace!

Chris Munn
127 Knight Ct.
Georgetown, KY 40324

Here you go, Chris. The reasons we've given serials to Wolverine, War Machine, and The New Warriors. First Wolverine; This story was commissioned and paid for before we took over MCP and had to be used. Millie in accounting, who is responsible for all the freelancers getting paid paid for their work, will let us know if a story or artwork, which has been paid for hasn't been used in a year and a half, at which point we have to use it, it's Millie's Law. Second; We gave War Machine his own serial because we wanted to help launch that series, and acquaint readers of MCP with the character. And we've been running The New Warriors in solo stories because some were commissioned before we took over (refer to Millie's Law, above) and we also thought it would be fun to use these characters outside of their regular team book (referring back to the answer to our first letter look for a Turbo story next issue).

Dear Marvel Comics Presents people,

MCP #160 was great! All the stories were excellently written and drawn.

Vengeance's story was an interesting first chapter. He has become a great character. When is he going to get his own series!?

The New Warriors and Slapstick were great. I'm a big Slapstick fan and I'm glad to see him again. But why hasn't he got his own series yet?

I didn't buy the Venom limited series with him in it, but Mace seems to be a pretty good character. Carl Potts is a great writer, but you don't see too much of him anymore. I'm happy to see him here. I'm hoping this story will bring back the Shadowmasters. It's been a long time since we've seen them.

I liked the Hawkeye limited series and this seems to be a pretty good sequel to it. However I am disappointed that Rover didn't make an appearance.

Keep up the good work guys, see you in 14.

Nicholas Ahlheim
P.O. Box 216
New Virginia, IA 50210

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COVER BY PAUL JOHNSON

MAN-THING

"BEHOLD THE MAN-THING"
PART 2 OF 4

WRITER .....SIMON JOWETT
ARTIST .....PAUL JOHNSON
LETTERS .....ELLIE DeVILLE
COLORS .....PAUL JOHNSON

Dazed and confused Ted Sallis is dicovered by members of a genteel Southern household. The fear crazed nightmare of the swamp.creature, all but forgotten. Forgotten that is, until Ted decides to enter the mysterious east wing.

MR. FANTASTIC

"CONFRONTATION"

WRITER .....MARIANO NICIEZA
PENCILS.....ED MUIR
INKS.....KLAUS JANSON
LETTERS .....UL HIGGINS
COLORS.....STEVE WHITAKER

The confrontational events in this story take place before Reed Richards untimely death in FANTASTIC FOUR #381.

NEXT ISSUE:

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MARVEL READERS PRESENT

c/o 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

Dear MCP,

I'm a new comer to the world of MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS. I bought my first issue, #155 to be exact, because it featured Kymaera of the New Warriors. I am a diehard Warriors fan, and have nearly every major appearance of the individual team members. So, I had to get the Kymaera storyline. I was so impressed with your book after then that I decided to put it on my list of "must haves" every month (or every two weeks, in this case). It was pure luck that another New Warriors storyline began immediately after Kymaera's.

And so today I bought issue #160, which contained chapter two of "Smells Like Teen Spirit". I am thoroughly enjoy ing this serial. Slapstick was a great character until he dropped off the face of the planet. It's nice to see he's back. Dr. Yesterday is a cool villain, with a costume to match. And I can't wait to see how Impossible Man fits into all of this. I've never heard of Robert Walker, but his artwork is amazing!

I'd like to take a crack at identifying the three adventures taking place during Turbo's flight through the timeworn city of New York. Spider-Man (in his black costume) and Firelord fought in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #269-270. More specifically, this panel most likely took place in #270, as Spidey was running from Firelord until the end of #269. The Avengers, with new member Carol Danvers, AKA Ms. Marvel (AKA Binary), fought the Absorbing Man in Avengers #183-184. The Liberty Legion, a team which included Patriot, Miss America, and Red Raven, made its debut in MARVEL PREMIER #29-30. This info wasn't easy to find; I used all my available sources (Official Handbook to the Marvel Universe, price guides, back issue bins) to find these answers. I just hope they're right!

The "Rocky Reunion" story, with Hawkeye and U.S.Agent is turning out to be pretty cool. I've been reading the brand new Force Works book, and it was nice to see the team hasn't forgotten about Hawkeye (even if Agent wants to kill him!)

Another nice feature was Mace. I didn't catch his appearance in VENOM, but I may want to check it out. I guess it depends on how this story turns out, and whether he interests me enough.

One complaint: Vengeance. You've gotten rid of Wolverine, and now I think Vengeance should follow suit. The Character just doesn't impress me, and I think the space could be put to better use. Let's see more underused characters in the future.

Keep up the great work!

Nick Eliopulos
6564 Diane Road
Jacksonville, FL 32277

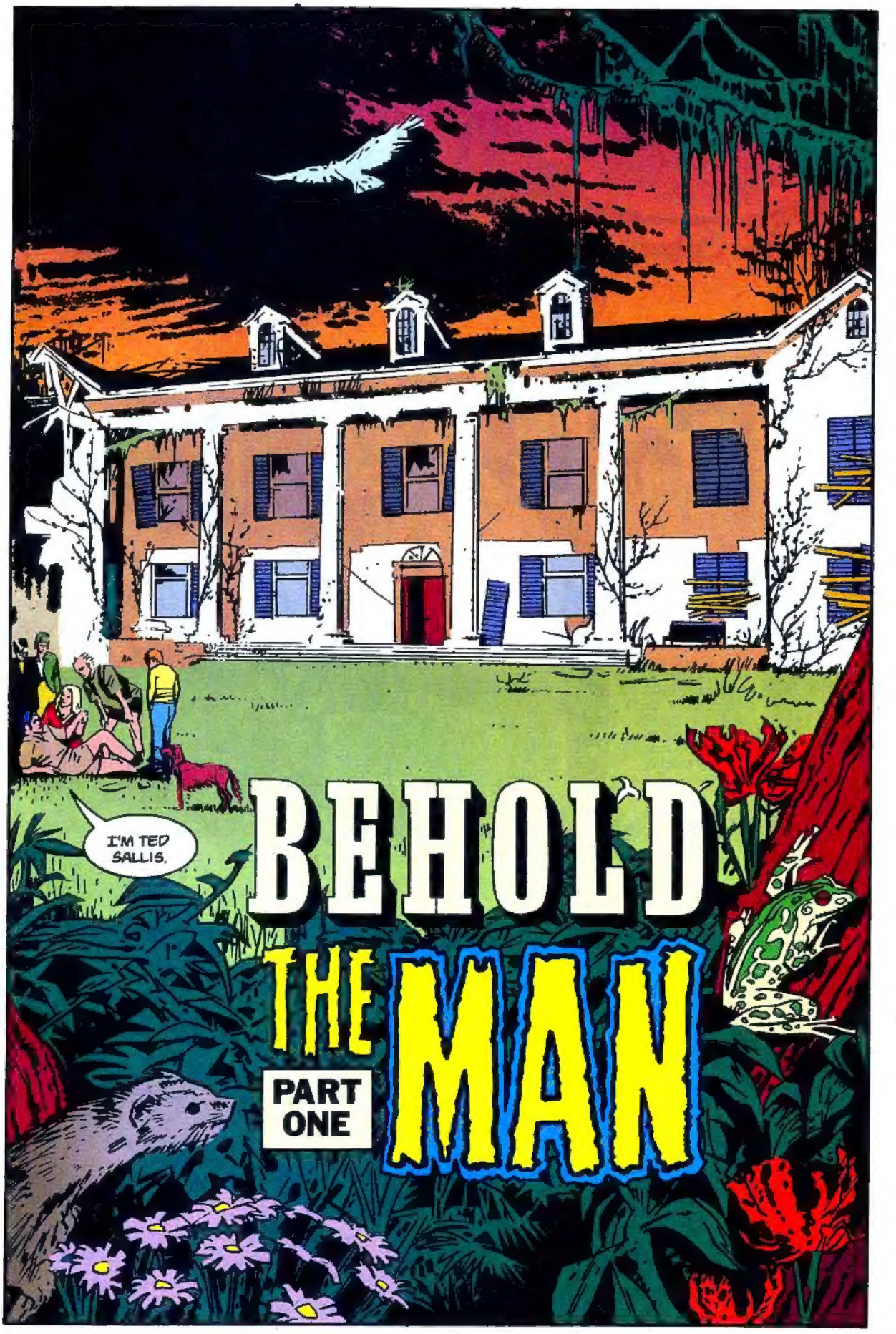
If you're a New Warriors fan Nick, you'll be glad to hear that we will be running a two part Turbo story by Evan Skolnick, Guy Dorian and John Stokes in MCP # 166 and 167. Robert Walker is a relative newcomer to comics, He was the penciler on Marvel's Meteor Man limited series and we predict a bright future for him and his work.

Dear Richard and Michael,

How's it hangin'? Thanks for printing my letter in MCP #152. It was my first letter to be printed, and hopefully, this will be my second!

COMING OUT OF THE DARK:
A JUMBLE OF IMPRESSIONS, FIGHTING FOR ATTENTION.
MEMORIES?
ANTISEPTIC STINGS MY NOSTRILS, FLUORESCENT LIGHT STABS AT MY EYES.
A LABORATORY.
MY LABORATORY?
AIR'S SO HUMID IT'S LIKE BREATHING THROUGH A WET TOWEL. SUNLIGHT STRUGGLES THROUGH THE DENSE CANOPY OVERHEAD.
MUD SUCKS AT MY HEELS. FOLIAGE FALLS IN HEAVY CURTAINS THAT TAKE LONG, EXHAUSTING MINUTES TO PUSH THROUGH.
WHAT AM I DOING SO DEEP IN THE SWAMP, SO FAR FROM THE LAB?
PEOPLE? WHO'D CHOOSE TO CAMP HERE?
WHO'S THAT?
LOOKS FIT T'DROP-- Y'ASK ME!
PERHAPS THEY HAVE A VEHICLE SOME WAY BACK TO THE LAB. BACK TO SOMEONE WHO CAN TELL ME...
... WHO I AM.

HE DEAD?
NO. HIS HEARTBEAT'S GOOD AND STRONG...
...BUT, BY THE LOOK OF HIM, HE HASN'T EATEN FOR A WHILE.
OOHHH.
...THE LAB. THE SERUM. THE SWAMP.
YOU FAINTED AND TOOK A TUMBLE, SO DON'T GO EXERTING YOURSELF.
YOU NEED A FEW DAYS REST BEFORE YOU EVEN THINK OF TAKING ANOTHER STEP.
SAY, WE DON'T GET A WHOLE LOT'A VISITORS OUT HERE. WHO ARE YA?
TED.
TED SALLIS.

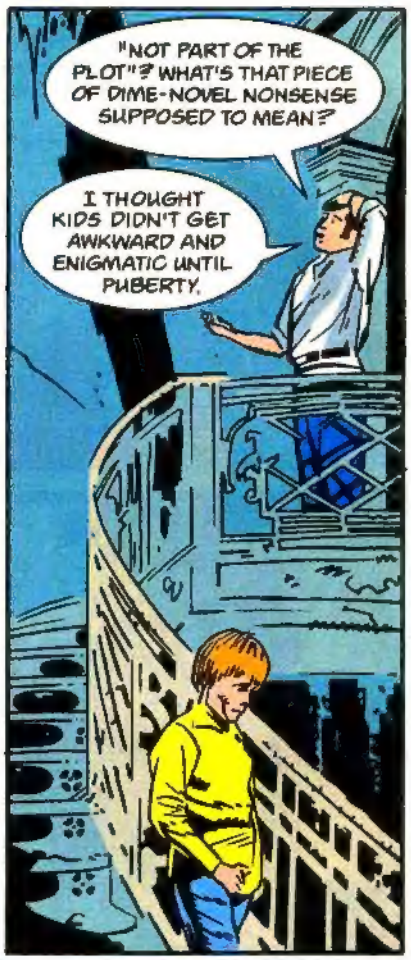

I'M TED SALLIS.
BEHOLD
THE MAN
PART ONE

... AND I WAS RIGHT. AFTER WE PUT YOU TO BED IN ELIJAH'S ROOM, YOU SLEPT 'ROUND THE CLOCK FOR THREE DAYS.
THEN YOU WOKE UP AND ATE LIKE A HORSE FOR THREE MORE!
YOU KNOW, I STILL DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE...
"... WHEN I WOKE UP, I WAS STILL TOO TIRED TO THINK. I GUESS I WAS AS CONFUSED AS MUTT TO FIND MYSELF IN HIS MASTER'S BED.
"BUT YOU WERE THE PERFECT NURSE. YOUR COMPANY WAS AS VITAL TO MY RECOVERY AS THE FOOD AND REST.
"THE FRIENDSHIP OF STRANGERS.
"ALL I COULD DO WAS CONCENTRATE ON RECOVERING MY STRENGTH. I MUST HAVE DRIVEN YOU CRAZY WITH MY DEMANDS FOR MORE FOOD!
"I TRIED TO REMEMBER MORE BUT WAS JUST AS HAPPY TO ENJOY THE SIMPLE PLEASURES OF THE MOMENT: THE SUN ON MY FACE. YOUR VOICE...
"IT FELT SO LONG SINCE I HAD ENJOYED SIMPLY BEING ALIVE."
I'M PRETTY SURE I'M A CHEMIST. I THINK I WORKED FOR THE GOVERNMENT ON SOMETHING SPECIAL... SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL.
IF IT'S SO SPECIAL WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO SPEND THE LAST THREE MONTHS OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?
WHY DO YOU THINK?

WHY, MISTER TED SALLIS! WHERE I COME FROM, A KISS LIKE THAT MEANS SOMETHING!
AND, MISS GENEVIEVE BEAUMAIN, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS!
I'LL HAVE TO FIND MY WAY BACK TO THE LAB, TELL MY BOSSES THAT I'M QUITTING, TELL MY FOLKS – IF THEY'RE STILL ALIVE – THAT I'M IN LOVE.
I'D LIKE YOU TO COME WITH ME, GEN, WHILE I TIDY AWAY THE PAST.
OH, TED...
I MAY BE UNSURE OF MY PAST, BUT I'M QUITE CLEAR ABOUT MY PRESENT, ABOUT YOU, ELIJAH, MUTT AND THE OTHERS AND THIS CRAZY OLD PLACE.
I KNOW I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS HAPPY, NEVER FELT SO AT PEACE... AND I DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT.
...I CAN'T.
GEN... WHY NOT?
I... I DON'T KNOW. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. PLEASE DON'T ASK ME...
GEN – WAIT! CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?
NO, TED, I'M... I'M CONFUSED. I NEED SOME AIR. I'M GOING OUTSIDE.
DON'T FOLLOW ME.
GEN PLEASE!
SALLIS.

WHAT IS IT, MARTIN? YOU'VE SAID MAYBE THREE WORDS TO ME SINCE I ARRIVED. COME TO GLOAT?
DO YOU KNOW WHY GEN WON'T COME WITH ME? IS THERE ANOTHER MAN?
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, SALLIS.

YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE PLOT.
YOU SHOULD LEAVE.


"NOT PART OF THE PLOT"? WHAT'S THAT PIECE OF DIME-NOVEL NONSENSE SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I THOUGHT KIDS DIDN'T GET AWKWARD AND ENIGMATIC UNTIL PUBERTY.

I HAD BETTER GIVE GEN TIME TO COOL OFF BEFORE I DIG ANY DEEPER. SHE'S NORMALLY SO CALM, SO TOGETHER, SO... PERFECT.
THE MYSTERIOUS EAST WING. SINCE I ARRIVED, NOBODY'S GONE IN THERE. EVERYONE I ASK ABOUT IT CHANGES THE SUBJECT.

I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TAKE A LOOK FOR MYSELF...
... NOW'S AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY.

GEN?
GEN!
TED, BOY, WHAT IS IT? I THOUGHT I HEARD--
IT'S GEN! I HEARD HER TOO!
WHOEVER'S SCARING HER THIS BADLY BETTER GET READY TO--

NEXT: WHAT KNOWS FEAR...

SLAVE OF PASSION
A TIGRA ADVENTURE TOLD IN FOUR PARTS.
PART THE FOURTH:
ENSNARED!
BLOWFLY, YOU STUPID JERK!
BY ABANDONING US ON TEMASIKA, YOU'VE JUST SIGNED YOUR TEAMMATES' DEATH WARRANTS!
HALT!

REEEEOOWW!
Whhaa--
YOU THREE RUN FOR IT... INTO THE JUNGLE!
GO!
ENOUGH!
:REOOW:
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

YOU SEE, PRETTY ONE... THERE IS A TIME TO FIGHT... AND A TIME TO OBEY.
LET GO... LET GO!!
SURRENDER OR I WILL HAND THEM OVER TO MY MEN.
hahaha
TO DO WITH AS THEY SEE FIT.
RAARRGGHH!
SUCH A PRETTY... PRETTY TEMPER.
EUNUCH!
MY LORD.
EUNUCH... THIS ONE AMUSES ME.

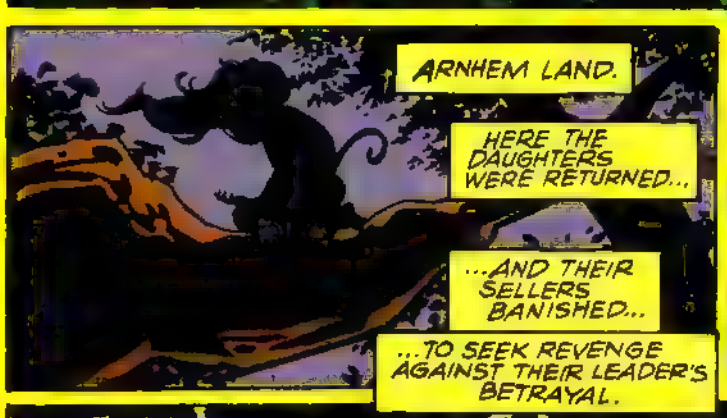
"YOU HAVE THREE DAYS TO TAME HER."
Reeeeoooow!
COME ON... IT'S ONLY A BATH...
PLEASE ...HE'LL HAVE MY EARS SLICED OFF
I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST...
I DON'T LIKE WATER.
WELL, YOU MAY NOT LIKE WATER BUT YOU CERTAINLY LIKE GETTING YOUR BACK RUBBED.
Purr Purr Purr
IT WON'T BE SO BAD, YOU'LL SEE...
puuuurrrrr
"...A LIFE OF LUXURY, FREE OF CARE AND WORRY...

"...AND SO LITTLE EXPECTED OF YOU IN RETURN."
Ahhh... I SEE THE CAT HAS BEEN TAMED.
Purr Purr Purr
THAT IS VERY GOOD!
GUARDS YOU MAY LEAVE.
BUT SIRE... SINGLE-HANDEDLY, THIS ONE, SHE --
GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE I HAVE YOU FLOGGED!

AND NOW, MY LITTLE KITTEN OF DELIGHT...
REEEOOOWW!
THAT'S IT... THAT'S IT... GIVE IT TO ME!
YEEAAARRGH!
THAT ONE--SHE IS A TIGER--YES?
INDEED, MY FRIEND... INDEED!

MY LORD?
DO WHAT SHE SAYS!
ANYTHING SHE WANTS...
...GIVE IT TO HER!
ANYTHING, MY LORD?
YOU HEARD ME!
Wha... WHAT DO YOU WISH?
THE GIRLS, THE THREE AUSTRALIANS...
"...AND YOUR FASTEST TRANSPORTATION."
THIS ISN'T THE END OF IT, TIGER-WOMAN. I PROMISE YOU...
...THIS ISN'T THE END!

ARNHEM LAND...
WHERE THE ABORIGINES LIVE AS THEIR ANCESTORS HAVE FOR 40,000 YEARS.
WHERE CYBORG PIRATES INTRUDED...
...KILLED, ENSLAVED AND SOLD...
...AND RECEIVED THE PAYBACK THAT BLACK LAW DEMANDS.


ARNHEM LAND.
HERE THE DAUGHTERS WERE RETURNED..
...AND THEIR SELLERS BANISHED..
...TO SEEK REVENGE AGAINST THEIR LEADER'S BETRAYAL.

ARNHEM LAND.
ROOoAAARR!
MY HOME.

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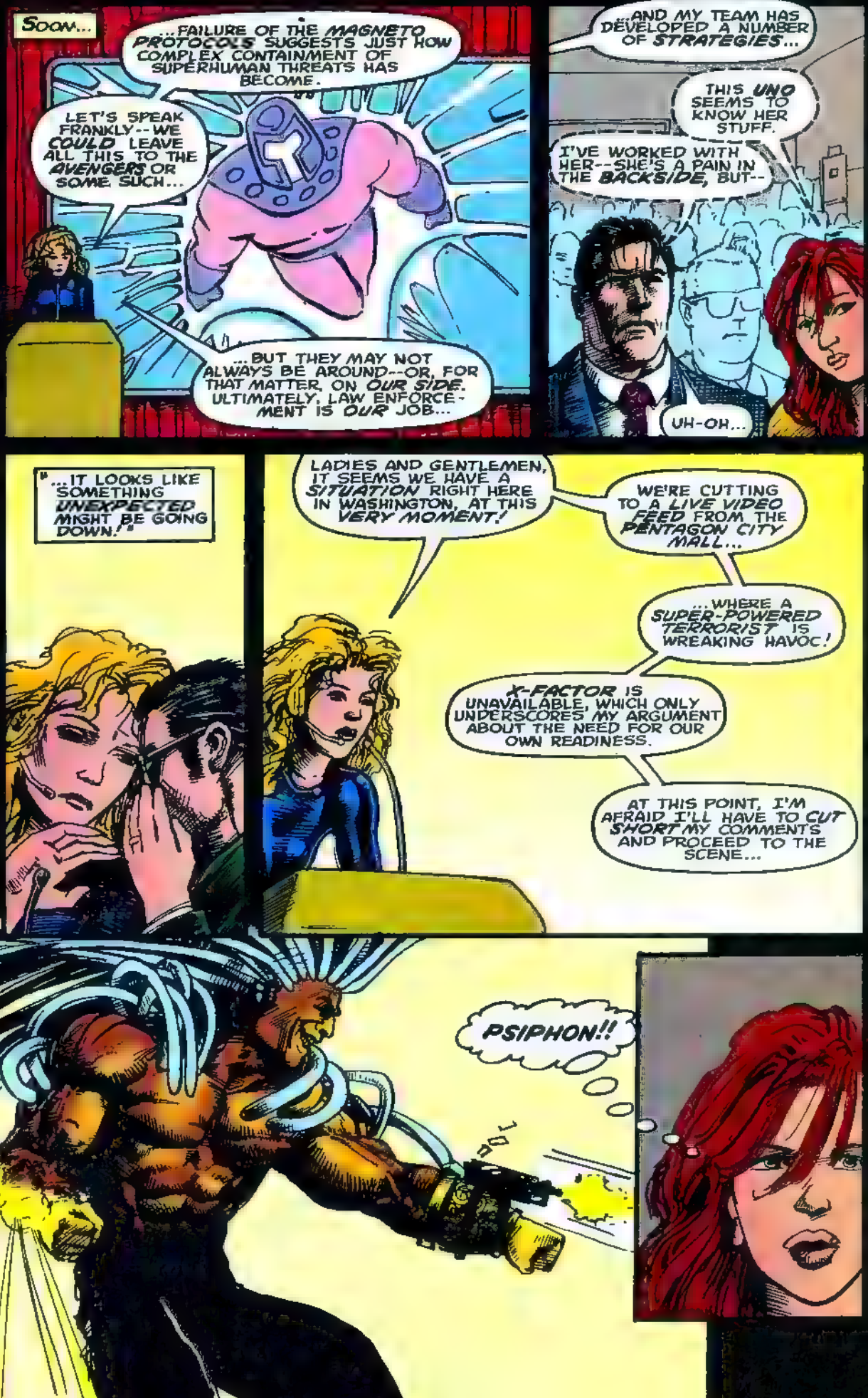
"WHEN GHOST RIDER CAME BACK, I GAVE UP BEING VENGEANCE TO LIVE OUT MY DAYS AS JUST PLAIN MICHAEL BADILINO IN BROOKLYN...
"...SO WHY AM I IN WASHINGTON D.C. AS VENGEANCE, DYING?
ZRAAK
AAAARGH!
VENGEANCE IN "POWER PLAY"

"A MERE HOUR AGO, I WOULD NEVER HAVE SUSPECTED THINGS WOULD END LIKE THIS..."
YOU'RE A PUZZLE TO ME, MICHAEL! ONE SECOND YOU DISAPPEAR FROM THE SCENE OF THAT LUNATIC PSIPHON'S ATTACK--
--AND THE NEXT, YOU INSIST ON TAGGING ALONG WITH ME TO THIS BORING LAW ENFORCEMENT SYMPOSIUM HERE IN D.C.--
--EVEN THOUGH I'M THE COP, NOT YOU! YOU QUIT THE NYPD, REMEMBER?!
EXACTLY, REBECCA-- SO I NEED A NEW JOB! CAN YOU THINK OF A BETTER PLACE TO NETWORK WITH MY PEERS?
...OR, CONSIDERING PSIPHON IS TARGETING THE CAPITAL FOR HIS NEXT ATTACK, A BETTER PLACE TO TAKE PSIPHON DOWN?
I SUPPOSE NOT... BUT THEN YOU'D BETTER LOOK PRESENTABLE. NOBODY WANTS TO HIRE A SLOB.
WHY, LT. TAYLOR, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU CARED!
DON'T GET HOT UNDER THE COLLAR, BIG GUY.
SHE SUSPECTS SOMETHING-- I CAN SEE IT IN HER EYES.
SHE HAS GREAT EYES...
...NOT THAT I--
PARDON ME, EH?
SAM BUCHANAN!
"HE MUST BE HERE IN HIS CAPACITY AS A FORMER INTERPOL AGENT!"
HE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE ME, BUT AS VENGEANCE, I FOUGHT BESIDE HIM...
...UNTIL THAT ALL-OUT WAR IN NEW YORK COST HIM HIS TWO FRIENDS.*
* IN THE SIEGE OF DARKNESS! --RICHARD
HE'S HERE. COMMENCE OPERATION VENGEANCE FORSAKEN.


SOON...
...FAILURE OF THE MAGNETO PROTOCOLS SUGGESTS JUST HOW COMPLEX CONTAINMENT OF SUPERHUMAN THREATS HAS BECOME.
LET'S SPEAK FRANKLY--WE COULD LEAVE ALL THIS TO THE AVENGERS OR SOME SUCH...
...BUT THEY MAY NOT ALWAYS BE AROUND--OR, FOR THAT MATTER, ON OUR SIDE. ULTIMATELY, LAW ENFORCEMENT IS OUR JOB...
...AND MY TEAM HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES...
THIS UNO SEEMS TO KNOW HER STUFF.
I'VE WORKED WITH HER--SHE'S A PAIN IN THE BACKSIDE, BUT--
UH-OH...
"...IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING UNEXPECTED MIGHT BE GOING DOWN!"
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT SEEMS WE HAVE A SITUATION RIGHT HERE IN WASHINGTON, AT THIS VERY MOMENT!
WE'RE CUTTING TO A LIVE VIDEO FEED FROM THE PENTAGON CITY MALL...
...WHERE A SUPER-POWERED TERRORIST IS WREAKING HAVOC!
X-FACTOR IS UNAVAILABLE, WHICH ONLY UNDERSCORES MY ARGUMENT ABOUT THE NEED FOR OUR OWN READINESS.
AT THIS POINT, I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO CUT SHORT MY COMMENTS AND PROCEED TO THE SCENE...
PSIPHON!!

MICHAEL, IT'S PSIPHON! WE'VE--
SORRY, MISTER, BUT I CAME WITH YOU TO WASHINGTON FOR A REASON--TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU'RE HIDING FROM ME!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE GETTING AWAY FROM ME THAT EASILY!
GONE AGAIN??
AT THE MALL...
ATTENTION, SHOPPERS! WE'VE GOT SOME SPECIALS FOR YOU TODAY!
OF COURSE, YOU MAY BE RECEIVING DAMAGED GOODS...
...OR MAYBE YOU'LL JUST BE RECEIVING DAMAGE!
BOM
SKRAAAASH
OH, DARN.
IT'S THAT NEW STORE DETECTIVE.

YOU SUCKERED ME IN NEW YORK, PSIPHON--*
--WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT IN MIND THIS TIME, I'M READY FOR YOU!
TSK TSK. POOR VENGEANCE--ALWAYS A LITTLE LATE ON THE UPTAKE.
*AGAIN, LAST ISSUE!--RICHARD
YOU SEE, I'M JUST THE BAIT. IT'S NOT ME WHO HAS SOMETHING IN MIND FOR YOU..
...IT'S HIM!!
BUCHANAN?!?
WHOSE SIDE IS HE ON? AND THAT GUN IN HIS HAND...
...IT'S THE EXORCIST, THE ANTI-OCCULT WEAPON THAT NEARLY TORE ME APA--
--AAAAAARGH!!
ZRRAKKOW

YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHERE THAT BLAST CAME FROM, EH?
ACTUALLY, I'VE RIGGED THE ENTIRE MALL WITH AUTOMATED EXORCIST WEAPONS KEYED TO YOUR UNIQUE ENERGY SIGNATURE...
...ABOUT TWICE AS MANY GUNS AS THE BIG GAME POSSE USED WHEN THEY NEARLY DESTROYED YOU.*
IN ISSUE #154. --RICHARD
YOU ARMED THE POSSE WITH EXORCISTS? AND NOW YOU'RE WORKING WITH THIS MADMAN PSIPHON?? WHY?!?
BECAUSE YOU AND ALL YOUR SO-CALLED MYSTICAL KIND HAVE TO BE STOPPED..
...BEFORE YOU DESTROY ANY MORE LIVES...
...LIKE YOU AND GHOST RIDER AND STRANGE DESTROYED VICKI'S!
IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?? YOUR FEELINGS FOR YOUR LOST PARTNER, WHOM DR. STRANGE TRIED TO SAVE?
THEN YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG, PAL, RIGHT DOWN TO YOUR LOVE FOR VICKI--
--BECAUSE MEN WEREN'T MUCH ON HER MIND...LEAST OF ALL YOU.
THAT DOES IT.
ALL EXORCISTS ON VOICE COMMAND--
--FIRE.
ZZRAAKOOOM

"I FEEL MY HELL-FIRE BEING BLASTED AWAY LIKE PEELING SKIN... FEEL THE BONES TURN TO SLAG..
"...AND THEN..
STOP!
YOU SAY HE DESTROYED A YOUNG WOMAN'S LIFE? WELL, HE SAVED MINE!
R-REBECCA...NO..
THIS IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN, TAYLOR. GET OUT OF THE WAY!!
NOT UNTIL YOU SEE WHAT I SEE...BECAUSE I KNOW THAT BEYOND THE MONSTROUS EXTERIOR, THERE'S SOMEONE CARING INSIDE!
LAST WARNING-- IF I HAVE TO DESTROY YOU TO GET HIM, I WILL!
FUNNY...
...THAT'S WHAT YOU ACCUSED HIM OF DOING.

GOOD LORD HOW DID I GET TO THIS POINT?
YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY FURTHER, BUCHANAN--
--EXCEPT IN A BODY BAG! YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO ANSWER FOR!
AND I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET, VENGEANCE! IF YOU THINK--
BOYS...
TRAITOR!
KILLER!
...BOYS...
AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMEONE?
WHY, SUCH POWERFUL EMOTIONS OF VENGEANCE, HATRED AND RECRIMINATION, FROM BOTH OF YOU--
--EMOTIONS THAT MY POWERS FEED ON, MAKING ME SO STRONG--
--THAT THERE'S NOTHING THAT CAN STOP ME NOW... NOTHING!
TO BE CONCLUDED!

THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
THE DEBRIS BELT SURROUNDING THE EXPLODING AREA.
A HARSH ENVIRONMENT WHERE ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE.
A PLACE WHERE OPPORTUNITIES MUST BE SEIZED.
HIS NAME IS BLASTAAR.
HE IS A CREATURE OF RAW POWER WHO THRIVES ON...

CONFRONTATION

NEW YORK CITY, FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
REED RICHARDS IS SPENDING AN UNUSUALLY QUIET TIME IN HIS LAB. IT WON'T LAST FOR LONG.
WITH EVERYONE AWAY FOR THE AFTERNOON, I FINALLY HAVE THE CHANCE TO WORK ON ONE OF MY PET PROJECTS, THE CONTIGUOUS-DIMENSIONAL ENERGY-TELEPORT-MATRIX.
STRANGE. THE INTERDIMENSIONAL TRANSFER COIL IS SHOWING A SURGE IN ENERGY.
I'D BETTER STEM THE FLOW UNTIL I CAN LOCK ONTO THE SOURCE OF THE POWER FEEDBACK.
IF THESE READINGS ARE RIGHT...
I'VE SEEN THIS ENERGY SIGNATURE BEFORE!
NO! THE ENERGY INHIBITORS HAVE BEEN BYPASSED!

ONLY ONE CHANCE LEFT!
THE EMERGENCY OVERRIDE!
BUT WAS I...?
TOO LATE, EARTH MAGGOT!
BLASTAAR WALKS AMONG YOU ONCE AGAIN!
AND THIS TIME I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I HAVE CONQUERED THIS PRIMITIVE MUDBALL!

YOUR AMBITIONS ARE STILL GREATER THAN YOUR ABILITIES, BLASTAAR!
IN ALL YOUR EXPERIENCES AWAY FROM THE NEGATIVE ZONE, YOU'VE LEARNED NOTHING!
HOW MANY TIMES MUST YOU BE DEFEATED BEFORE YOU REALIZE THAT YOUR POWER IS NO MATCH FOR HUMAN INTELLECT AND COURAGE?
FLARE
"IT WAS ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO...
...THAT I FIRST ENCOUNTERED YOU IN THE DEBRIS BELT OF THE EXPLODING AREA.
XMAN BACK IN FANTASTIC FOUR #61-63.
AARRRGGHH! MY EYES, I CAN'T SEE!
"YOU WERE BOUND IN AN ADHESION SUIT LIKE A HELPLESS BABE."
I PLAN TO RETURN YOU TO YOUR NEGATIVE ZONE PEERS IN THE SAME CONDITION.
URRKHHFF!

THIS ELECTRO-MAGNA NET SHOULD BE MOLECULARLY DENSE ENOUGH TO CONTAIN YOU!
PRATTLE ON ALL YOU WANT, RICHARDS. YOUR TOYS WILL NOT STOP ME.
I AM POWER INCARNATE!
I AM BLASTAAR!
SOON YOUR ENTIRE WORLD WILL FEEL THE MIGHT OF MY POWER!
YOU ARE WRONG, BLASTAAR! IT TAKES MORE THAN RAW POWER TO MAKE A MAN A WINNER!
EVEN IF YOU MANAGE TO GET PAST ME, THERE ARE COUNTLESS OTHERS WHO WILL OPPOSE YOU--
WHAT?! NO!
DANGER
YOUR BLAST HIT THE MATRIX POWER CONVERTER!
IT WILL GO CRITICAL IN SECONDS UNLESS IT'S CHECKED!

GO AND PLAY WITH YOUR TOYS, RICHARDS.

I HAVE *WASTED* ENOUGH *TIME* WITH YOU!

WHY BOTHER TRYING TO *SWAT* ONE INSECT WHEN THERE IS AN *ENTIRE* NEST WAITING *OUTSIDE?*

BRKOOM

AH, THE PRIMITIVE STONE AND GLASS SPIRES. JUST AS I *RE-MEMBER* THEM.

NOT SO *FAST*, BLASTAAR!

LET'S SEE IF YOUR *SKULL* IS AS THICK AS I REMEMBER *IT.*

HUH?

KRAAACK

YOU'RE *NOT* GOING *ANYWHERE!*

I'M *NOT* FINISHED WITH YOU *YET!*

PATHETIC, MEWLING EARTHER! DID YOU THINK A PUNY TAP LIKE *THAT* COULD POSSIBLY HURT THE *ALL-POWERFUL* BLASTAAR?

COME ON THEN, BLASTAAR! *SHOW* ME WHAT *YOU'VE* GOT!

WHEN *HE* BROKE THROUGH THAT *WALL* IT GAVE ME AN *IDEA.*

I'VE *ONLY* GOT SECONDS...

IT'S OVER, RICHARDS! YOU HAVE NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN!
ZRAPT
UGHNFF!
IT IS DONE! HE IS DEAD!
IT BEGAN WITH THE TWO OF US IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE. IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT IT ENDS HERE ON EARTH.
FOR ALL YOUR VAUNTED TALK OF INTELLIGENCE AND COURAGE, IT WAS THE MATCHLESS POWER OF BLASTAAR WHICH ULTIMATELY CRUSHED YOU.
NOW THE PRIZE AWAITS ME! I WILL LEVEL THIS PUNY WORLD AND RESHAPE IT IN MY IMAGE!
WAIT! THIS ISN'T THE HOLE I BLASTED! NO!
NOOOOOO!!
THE HOLOGRAM PROJECTOR WORKED PERFECTLY! NOT ONLY DID IT CREATE A SIMULATION OF ME, BUT IT MASKED THE LAB'S OPEN PORTAL TO THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
SHUNK
BLASTAAR THOUGHT HE WAS LEAPING INTO THE CITY SKYLINE--WHEN IN REALITY HE FLEW INTO THE LAST PLACE HE WANTED TO GO...
"BACK TO THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
THAT'S ONE SMALL STEP FOR IGNORANCE...ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND.
THE END.